

Martina enters Kremlin Cup final

MOSCOW, Oct 28: Top seed Martina Hingis of Switzerland reached the WTA Kremlin Cup final at the first attempt, beating Anelie Mauresmo of France at the Olympic tennis stadium here on Saturday, reports AFP.

Hingis, who reached her third consecutive title match after a victory on home soil in the Swisscom Challenge last week and at Filderstadt the week before, saw off her French opponent 7-5, 6-2 in 71 minutes.

Fifth-seed Mauresmo got off to a lively start in her eighth meeting with the world number one, breaking twice early in the opening set to earn a comfortable 5-1 lead.

But 20-year-old Hingis roared back to take the set in 35 minutes, winning six consecutive games and making the decisive break in the 12th game.

Both rivals traded breaks early in the second but Hingis looked more precise and confident, winning the set and match to face either Russia's fourth-seed Anna Kournikova or defending champion Natalie Tauziat of France in the final.

Duel in the

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the final in place of a batsman. Either Sri Lankan Srikanth or Vinod Kambli, who are short of runs and confidence, will make way for the lucky bowler.

Sri Lanka, meanwhile, have no reason to make drastic changes as they come closer to attaining the form that won them the World Cup in 1996.

This year has been a profitable one for Sri Lankan cricket, winning a tri-series at home against Pakistan and South Africa in July, besides reaching the final of the Asia Cup in Bangladesh in May.

Significantly, Sri Lanka have beaten India in all their three encounters this year.

Jayasuriya said his young team had adequately filled in the vacuum created by the fading away of veteran stars Arjuna Ranatunga and Aravinda De Silva, who masterminded the World Cup win.

"The team is very fit and very enthusiastic," he said. "That's what winning does to you and we want to keep it that way."

TEAMS

INDIA (from): Saurav Ganguly (captain), Sachin Tendulkar, Sridharan, Sriram, Vinod Kambli, Yusuf Pathan, Hemang Badani, Robin Singh, Vijay Dahiya, Ajit Agarkar, Sunil Joshi, Zaheer Khan, Venkatesh Prasad.

SRI LANKA (from): Sanath Jayasuriya (captain), Marvan Atapattu, Mahela Jayawardene, Kumar Sangakkara, Russell Arnold, Romesh Kaluwitharana, Dilshan Tillekeratne, Chaminda Vaas, Nuwan Zoysa, Muthiah Muralitharan, Kaushalya Weeraratne, Eric Upasanthana.

India Murali

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INDIA
Ganguly c Saurav b Vaas 1
Tendulkar c Vaas b Mitharan 61
Sriram c Dilshan b Vaas 6
Robin c sub (Upul) b Mitharan 31
Kambli c and b Mitharan 10
Yuvraj c Dilshan b Mitharan 7
Badani c J'suriya b Mitharan 42
Dahiya c Arnold b Mitharan 40
Joshi c Kwitharana b Mitharan 3
Agarkar not out 5
Zaheer b J'suriya 6
Extras: (lb-4, w-4, nb-6) 24
Total (all out in 48.5 overs) 126
Fall of wickets: 1-2, 2-24, 3-39, 4-109, 5-120, 6-129, 7-206, 8-211, 9-211.

Bowler O M R W
Vaas 6 0 36 2
Zoysa 8 1 37 0
Upasanthana 5 0 41 0
Mitharan 10 1 30 7
Arnold 8 1 26 0
J'suriya 7 5 0 26 1

Result: Sri Lanka won by 68 runs.

Man-of-the-match: Muthiah Muralitharan.

Asia's battle

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are not going to let the Asian Cup go just like that," he added.

Al-Jaber shrugged off the earlier defeat against Japan, and said the holders had been revitalised by the sacking of Czech coach Macala. He said the appointment of fellow Saudi Nasser Jaohar as Macala's replacement had lifted the squad.

"The spirit in the team is completely different now. We are happy, we are a team again," he said.

"Jaohar lets us play the Saudi way. Technically there's not much difference in the team, but our team spirit is much stronger now," Al-Jaber said. Jaohar, who will become only the second Saudi coach to win the title if they are victorious on Sunday.

Al-Jaber, who is normally used as an out and out striker but has been pulled back into a withdrawn role during this tournament, said he is not concerned by the fact that he has yet to get his name on the scoresheet.

"It doesn't really matter - we've got other people from midfield and attack who are getting into the positions and scoring. But maybe it would be good to get my first goal in the final," he added.

Super-charged Safin

MOSCOW, Oct 28: Top-seeded Andrei Safin of Russia outscored Belarus' Vladimir Voltchkov in straight sets 7-6, 6-1 to reach the semifinals of the ATP Kremlin Cup here on Friday, reports AFP.

The 20-year-old US Open champion fought all the way in the opening set before winning on a tiebreak in 47 minutes.

Safin streaked away in the second winning set and match in one hour 17 minutes.

Defending champion Yevgeny Kafelnikov also moved to the semifinal, ousting Germany's qualifier Lars Burgsmuller in straight sets 6-3, 6-2.

Burgsmuller got off to a lively start, breaking immediately in the first game but Russia's Sydney Olympics champion pulled level at 1-1, winning the second set 7-5 after he broke his rival's serve in the 12th game.

They fought for an hour in the deciding set up to the tie-break, which Prinosil won to advance.

Prinosil, who served 19 aces against Bjorkman's five in the tournament's longest match so far, will meet Safin in Saturday's semi-final.

The longstanding favourite with the local crowd Marc Rosset of Switzerland bounced back after Young Russia's player Mikhail Youzhny won the opening set of their 150-minute quarterfinal clash.

The 18-year-old Youzhny broke early in the opening set but fourth-seed Rosset levelled at 2-2 before the elder ing Russian teenager won the first in the tie-break in 55 minutes.

In the second set Kafelnikov, second seed here, underlined his domination, winning the set and match in less than an hour.

David Prinosil of Germany, unseeded here, had to fight through three tough sets 7-6, 5-7, 7-6 and two hours 41 minutes of his quarterfinal match against Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman.

Prinosil, currently 58th in the world, won the opening set in the tie-break in 59 minutes, but Bjorkman, also unseeded, pulled level at 1-1, winning the second set 7-5 after he broke his rival's serve in the 12th game.

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In the second, both players were holding their serves until the 10th game, when Rosset, two-time champion here in 1992 and 1993, broke to level at one-all.

The deciding set went to the tie-break, which Rosset won in 47 minutes to book his meeting with Kafelnikov in the semis.

After the match Rosset said he was upset with his performance, especially with his serve, adding his opponent was playing well in front of his home crowd.

"I really served pretty bad and had the worst tie-breaker in my life," Rosset told the press. "He played like a guy who is 18 and had nothing to lose, going for the shot when he's in tough situation," he added.

Kumble played in the opening game against Sri Lanka but then was out for the next two games.

Gaekwad said Kumble was having problem with his bowling shoulder which swells up whenever he bowls for longer period. But he clarified it had nothing to do with the rotator cuff injury which had kept Kumble out of the team earlier.

Top seed Sidot sent packing

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Also the tournament's third-seeded player, Belgium's Justine Henin lost in the quarterfinal match. She was ousted by Czech player Daniela Bedanová, seeded sixth, 6-3, 5-7, 6-4.

Fourth-seeded Denisa Chladkova of the Czech Republic showed that she had more abilities than Austria's Sylvia Plischke and won 7-6, 6-3.

Two Slovak players, Henrieta Nagyova and Karina Habsudova met in the quarterfinals, which attracted local spectators. Habsudova beat her countrywoman 6-4, 0-6, 6-3.

In semifinals Chladkova will play Oremans, and Bedanova will meet with Habsudova.

Hussain has no excuses

LAHORE, Pakistan, Oct 28: England captain Nasser Hussain downplayed his team's failure against spinners in the second cricket one-day against Pakistan here Friday, saying it was no "great story".

"I know it's a great story for you guys that we got bowled out by spinners but it's not a mystery for me, for me it's no great story," Hussain told reporters after the match.

England lost to Pakistan by eight wickets with spinners taking all eight in England's 211-9.

"When you come to Asia you come face-to-face with spinners, you play Saqlain Mushtaq and Mushtaq Ahmed and in India you play Anil Kumble and in Sri Lanka it's Muthiah Muralitharan," he said.

England is touring Pakistan after 13 years and face quality spinners on turning strips. They will play a three-match Test series after the limited-overs international matches.

"I don't know about Tests but we knew when we came here that we will have to play on turning wickets," Hussain said.

"We have been working hard on spinners in the net and we must learn quickly. I don't blame the boys."

Leg-spinning all-rounder Shahid Afridi took a career best 5-40 with off-spinner Saqlain and Mushtaq taking two and one wickets respectively.

"We set us 250 to score and that's what looked in sight when we were 180 with 10 overs to go but we didn't play well in the end," Hussain said.

"Once we fell for 211 most of the pressure was off Pakistan and had we got 250 we would have had them, because they are not a good side chasing," he said.

Pakistani skipper Moin Khan was delighted over his team's comeback.

I am delighted that the boys did well and its now 1-1 and we must concentrate on the decider," to be played at Rawalpindi on Monday, Khan said.

Khan praised all-rounder Shahid Afridi for his dual part.

Twose leads

From page 13

Astle c Boucher b Telemachus 5
Fleming run out (Dippenaar) 85
Twose c Pollock b Kallis 89
Cairns c Pollock b Kallis 21
McMillan c Kirsten b Pollock 1
Harris not out 11
Parore not out 0
Extras: (lb-2, lb-2, w-2, nb-1) 7
Total: (For 6 wickets in 50 overs) 287

Did not bat: S. Styris, B. Walker, S. O'Connor.

Fall of wickets: 1-20, 2-113, 3-223, 4-272, 5-275, 6-283.

Bowler O M R W
Pollock 10 0 40 1
Telemachus 9 0 60 1
Donald 5 0 46 0
Kallis 8 0 46 2
Boje 10 0 42 0
Kluseker 8 0 49 0

SOUTH AFRICA: S. Pollock, G. Kirsten, H. Dippenaar, N. Boje, J. Kallis, D. Cullinan, J. Rhodes, L. Kluseker, M. Boucher, A. Donald, R. Telemachus.

Umpires: R. Koertzen and B. Jerling.

SHARJAH, Oct 28: India's champion leg-spinner Anil Kumble, who is nursing a sore bowling arm shoulder, may miss the historic Test against Bangladesh on November 10 through his participation in the Sharjah tri-series final on Sunday was not ruled out, reports PTI.

He could be out of action for three to four weeks, coach Anshuman Gaekwad said after India defeated Zimbabwe by three wickets on Thursday to move into the final of triangular one-day series. "It depends on how quickly he recovers from the injury."

Kumble played in the opening game against Sri Lanka but then was out for the next two games.

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